

VZCZCXRO2796  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK  
DE RUEHGB #1362 1111708  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 211708Z APR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0831  
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 001362

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/2017

TAGS: PGOV PINR KDEM PHUM IZ

SUBJECT: PRT TIKRIT: PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORTIVE OF  
DE-BAATH DRAFT LEGISLATION

REF: BAGHDAD 1165

Classified By: PRT Leader Steven Buckler, for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is a PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din cable.

¶2. (C) SUMMARY. The Salah ad Din provincial leadership, including the former Baathist Deputy Governor, has stated its support for the draft debaathification reform law, as agreed upon by President Talabani and Prime Minister al Maliki (reftel). Terming the draft law as "very good," the Deputy Governor conceded that the legislation "would be stronger" if its provisions returned individuals at the shubah level to work, rather than retiring them. Both the SaD Governor and Deputy Governor said they were keen for the law to be passed in order to return many of the province's technocratic former Baathists to work and to see the government services they provide returned to the public. They rebuffed the comments allegedly made by Grand Ayatollah Ali al Sistani against the draft law as the work of Debaathification Chair Ahmed Chalabi trying to keep Sunnis out of the democratic political process. Debaathification reform remains a key issue for SaD Sunnis, and a law that addresses their concerns will give necessary support to political moderates in the province and lend credibility to the GOI's reconciliation efforts. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (C) In several private conversations, the Salah ad Din (SaD) leadership has stated its support for the draft debaathification reform law, as agreed upon by President Talabani and Prime Minister al Maliki (reftel). Additionally, in an April 7 courtesy call with new PRToffs, the SaD Governor and Deputy Governor listed debaathification reform as one of the province's top policy objectives, saying they hoped the Council of Representative (CoR) would approve the law in the very near term. They said the legislation was crucial for seeing the province's former Baathist technocratic civil servants return to work and to see the government services they provide returned to the province's residents.

¶4. (C) Terming the draft law as "very good," former Baathist SaD Deputy Governor Abdullah Ajbarah al Jabouri conceded that it "would be stronger" if its provisions returned individuals at the shubah level to work, rather than retiring them. He also stated that the Baath Party should be permitted to return to the political process as one party in a multi-party democracy. He acknowledged, however, that such a reform would have to come in the form of constitutional revision. The Deputy Governor did not express concerns about the more ambiguous points of the draft legislation, such as the formation of a Special Committee or the various political review processes.

¶5. (C) Both the Governor and Deputy Governor rebuffed the comments allegedly made by Grand Ayatollah Ali al Sistani against the draft law as the work of Debaathification Chair

Ahmed Chalabi trying to keep Sunnis out of the democratic political process.

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

¶6. (C) Debaathification reform remains a key issue for SaD Sunnis, and a law that addresses their concerns will give necessary support to political moderates in the province and lend credibility to the GOI's reconciliation efforts. It also appears that the provincial leadership is keen to see reforms go through to demonstrate to the province that it can effectively interface with the central government and deliver on national policies important to the predominately Sunni province. END COMMENT.

¶7. (U) For additional reporting from PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din, please see our SIPRNET Reporting Blog:  
<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/Tikrit>.

CROCKER